

Targets in North Vietnam for Retaliatory Air Attack

1. The air targets listed and located on the attachment have been selected for use in retaliation in the event that ships of the United States Navy are subject to additional attack by naval vessels or by aircraft based on the territory of North Vietnam. These targets have been selected for the purpose of providing a limited, measured response which can be directly related to the attack against the United States Navy. If destroyed, they will also have some effect on the ability of North Vietnam to support Communist forces in Laos and the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. Further, these targets appear preferable to strikes against military supply dumps, which are so numerous as to be relatively invulnerable to a limited air attack. Further military supply dumps could be related only tangentially to a retaliatory strike.

2. The targets selected consist of the following: six naval bases and, alternatively, six air bases from which the attacks might originate or to which attackers would almost certainly return for servicing and repairs; four petroleum storage bases (over 80% of the existing capacity in the country) from which the military forces as well as the civilian economy might be fueled; and four key rail and road bridges the absence of which would temporarily impair not only the supply and rehabilitation of the foregoing target bases, but also the movement of supplies to Communist forces in Laos and South Vietnam. Successful air attacks on the foregoing targets would be costly to the North Vietnamese, but would not cripple for any protracted period their ability to support further aggressive action at sea or in neighboring countries if they continue to receive military and industrial support from China. However, neutralization of the selected targets could have a deterrent effect on North Vietnam and Communist Chinese intentions to widen the area of hostilities by demonstrating clearly the seriousness of US intentions.

Targets for Retaliation Against an Attack by Naval Vessels

3. Six naval bases (targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) at which patrol craft are normally based, each having some building or repair facilities, have been selected as targets for retaliation. As of 6 August 1964 it is believed that these bases harbor the bulk of the North Vietnamese patrol craft. Two of the bases, Hon Gay and Vinh, (targets 2 and 5) were attacked earlier, but a number of damaged rather than destroyed craft remain. The other four were not targets of the previous retaliatory effort. Haiphong and Hon Gay appear to have the major repair or new construction capabilities. Destruction of the lesser repair facilities at the other bases would prolong the period of relative impotence of the North Vietnamese navy.

Targets for Retaliation Against an Attack by Aircraft

4. The six airfields selected as targets are believed to be those capable of accommodating jet aircraft. The first three (targets 7, 8, and 9) are fully capable of handling fighter-bombers. The other (targets 10, 11, and 12) have shorter runways, 5,700-6,500 feet, and could take only obsolescent jet fighters or partially loaded fighter bombers. All could of course accommodate piston aircraft.

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

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JCS review(s)
completed.

5. It should be borne in mind however that even very heavy strikes against airfield facilities with conventional weapons will only temporarily put them out of operation by cratering the runway and by neutralizing a part of the repair and maintenance facilities. To be most effective, therefore, the retaliatory attacks should take place when a substantial number of the intruding aircraft are on the ground and can be neutralized. Aircraft attrition could be a serious problem to the Chinese Communists if it affected a significant portion of their modern jet air order of battle because the Chinese Communists are believed to be cut off from replacement supplies by the USSR. Loss of scarce modern aircraft could have a deterrent effect on Chinese support to North Vietnam and hence on the scope of hostilities.

Petroleum Storage Targets

6. The petroleum storage facilities at Haiphong consist of three docks equipped with pipe lines to storage tanks. It is the only installation in North Vietnam which can accept petroleum products from ocean-going tankers. It is therefore the principal point of entry for POL. The tanks at Haiphong have nearly one half of the total storage capacity of the country. The tanks at Hanoi with two thirds the capacity at Haiphong serve as a central distribution point. The smaller storage facility at Nguyen Khe probably serves the new airfield at Phuc Yen and the very small facility at Nam Dinh is adjacent to the ship repair facilities. Loss of these facilities and their supplies of POL would deprive both the military forces and the civilian economy of needed liquid fuel supplies in the short run, until drum storage arrangements could be made. In a real sense, the petroleum storage facility targets reinforce the military targets -- the airfields and/or naval facilities. (Targets are 13, 14, 15, 16).

Railroad and Road Bridge Targets

7. The four rail and road bridge targets have been selected as those of outstanding retaliatory attack value; if destroyed main supply lines for military traffic in North Vietnam would be affected. The bridge at Hai Duong cuts rail and road communication between Hanoi and Haiphong. The Ham Rong bridge opened in May this year permitted the reestablishment of rail traffic to Vinh carrying support not only for southern coastal bases but also for Communist forces in Laos and South Vietnam. The destruction of this rail and road bridge would hamper those supply movements. The Hanoi bridge over the Red River carries main line traffic from China to Hanoi. The road bridge at Thanh Yen serves the naval base and airfield at Dong Hoi and carries traffic moving to the demarcation line. (Targets are 17, 18, 19, 20).

~~SECRET~~Target AppendixNaval Bases and Repair Facilities

Target Number	Name	Location	Remarks
1	Port Wallut	21 13 N 107 34 E	Motor torpedo boat operating base; storage facilities
2	Hon Gay	20 58 N 107 04 E	Motor gunboat operating base
3	Haiphong	20 51 N 106 41 E	Principal naval base with repair yard
4	Nam Dinh	20 25 N 106 10 E	River port with boatbuilding and repair facilities
5	Vinh	18 39 N 105 42 E (Ben Thary) 18 40 N 105 44 E (Yen Lou)	Motor gunboat operating base
6	Dong Hoi	17 29 N 106 37 E	Operating and repair base for patrol craft

Airfields

Target Number	Name	Location	Length of Runway (feet)	Type of Runway Surface
7	Hanoi-Phuc Yen	21 13 N 105 48 E	8,700	Concrete
8	Haiphong-Cat Bi	20 48 N 106 44 E	8,000	Concrete
9	Hanoi-Gia Lou	21 02 N 105 53 E	5,350	Concrete
10	Haiphong-Kien An	20 48 N 106 37 E	5,900	Concrete
11	Dong Hoi	17 30 N 106 35 E	5,700	Asphalt-macadam
12	Vinh	18 43 N 105 40 E	6,400	Laterite

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<u>Target Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Tanks</u>	<u>Capacity (Metric Tons)</u>
13	Haiphong	20 52 N 106 41 E	37	62,000
14	Hanoi	20 59 N 105 50 E	44	47,000
15	Nguyen Khe	21 10 N 105 51 E	13	12,500
16	Nam Dinh	20 25 N 106 10 E	4	4,800

Railroad and Road Bridges

<u>Target Number</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Length (feet)</u>	<u>Materials</u>
17	Hai Duong Railroad and Road Bridge	20 56 N 106 21 E	1,250	Steel
18	Ham Rong Railroad and Road Bridge	17 39 N 106 32 E	525	Steel
19	Hanoi Railroad and Road Bridge (over Red River)	21 02 N 105 51 E	5,510	Steel
20	Thanh Yen Road Bridge	17 39 N 106 32 E	490	Reinforced Concrete

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